

BALLET TODAY

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JUNE 1951

1/-



PETER REVITT'S

BALLET GUYED

with a foreword by MARY CLARKE

is a book of brilliant caricatures of the leading dancers of the day. Peter Revitt's work needs no introduction to readers of "BALLET TODAY" and his genius for the witty comment in line is here crystallised in 36 dazzling sketches including Alexandra Danilova, Anton Dolin, Rosella Hightower, Alicia Markova, Leonide Massine, Tatiana Riabouchinska.

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WHILE THEY LAST

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

IN spite of a cool first night press, *Daphnis and Chloe* has won its way into the hearts of a large section of the audience, for it never fails to receive a tremendous reception. The dancers judge the success of a ballet on any given evening by whether or not it receives a call after the house lights have gone up, for nothing normally kills applause quicker than this. I have never yet seen a performance which did not receive at least two calls after the lights went up, so it seems that public opinion is with it.

Fonteyn in Copenhagen

As far as I could discover not a line appeared in any English newspaper about the special performance of *Aurora's Wedding* given by the Royal Danish Bal-

let on April 14th for which Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes flew to Copenhagen. The Danish reconstruction of the last act of *The Sleeping Beauty* includes the Rose Adagio, a solo for Prince Florimund and the Coda to the *grand pas de deux* which Diaghilev had re-orchestrated and arranged for the Three Ivans and which the Sadler's Wells production retains though International Ballet dance it in its original form. Fonteyn and Somes adapted their performance to fit into the Danish production, and the columns which appeared in the Danish Press about this visit amounted to about as much as all our newspapers, both weekly and Sunday, would devote between them to a year's ballet events over here.

Fonteyn was yet again hailed as the greatest ballerina of the day. Typical of the reviews was that of the *Berlingske Tidende* which said:—'Her pure style and magnetic personality are today the best in international ballet, she is the crown jewel of ballet art . . . Margot Fonteyn is a virtuoso, her art is sovereign and sublime. Even though she seems to be richly mounted in her own unassailable and incomparable accuracy, she is at the same time a sensitively vivid and inspired dancer. Her style has not only supreme technique but feeling and spirit which makes it sparkling and inspiring'.

Somes was also acclaimed for his fine appearance and his splendid and unselfish partnering.

The Last 'Les Patineurs'

The last performance of *Les Patineurs* was due to be the final appearance of this particular set which was badly knocked about during its American and Canadian tour. It had barely held together all

ALEXANDER GRANT AS
BRYAXIS AND MARGOT
FONTEYN AS CHLOE IN
'DAPHNIS AND CHLOE'



Photograph by
Bryan Ashbridge

through the season but no one could have foreseen such a holocaust as actually occurred when section after section of trellis collapsed. *The Times*, with that pawky humour which endears it to us all, headed its paragraph on the event—'Fallen Arches', and certainly it went down fighting.

And talking of *Les Patineurs*, in my last month's notice I mentioned that Brian Shaw still had difficulty with a musical sequence (which has worried every dancer I have ever seen in this ballet). I saw two more performances after my notice had gone to press and he had obviously given this considerable thought himself, for my remark no longer applies. His dancing is now brilliant and musically sensitive throughout.

'BALLERINA' AT THE CONTINENTALE CINEMA

At long last this Russian film is having a public showing (the New London Film Society screened it specially nearly a year ago). As the film critics have pointed out, it is not technically a good film but any of us would gladly sit through far greater rubbish to see Ulanova with Preobrajensky as her partner dancing the *pas de deux* in the second act of *Le Lac des Cygnes*, surrounded by the Leningrad *corps de ballet*. I do not think she dances it quite so well as in the *Two Ballerinas* film but even so she has an incomparable quality of flowing movement which holds one

MARGOT FONTEYN AND MICHAEL SOMES IN THE THIRD SCENE PAS DE DEUX OF 'DAPHNIS AND CHLOE', SKETCHED BY JEAN TARGET



MARGOT FONTEYN AS CHLOE SKETCHED BY JEAN TARGET

spellbound. To see her step on to point for an *arabesque* is in itself a supreme aesthetic experience. One of the most delightful surprises in the film is to learn that the rather uninteresting waltz played here before Act 3 is danced by the *corps de ballet* in Act 1, and very exciting it is to see them whirling and leaping. At the end of it the Prince makes his magnificent, sweeping entry. We would like to have seen much more of the rehearsal room scenes, and the little girls who curtsy so politely on the stairs: in fact we would gladly have done without the story altogether, for what shines all through this film is the passionate belief of every dancer in the art to which she is dedicated.

DANISH BALLET FESTIVAL

By the time this magazine appears I shall be in Copenhagen as one of the English critics invited to attend a special Festival season by the Royal Danish Ballet—an honour we all greatly appreciate. The August number will contain a special article and photographs of this important event.

P.W.M.

The photograph by Constantine on the cover is of Mia Slavenska who will be appearing as Guest Artist with Festival Ballet at the end of June.

PATRICIA MILLER AND
DAVID BLAIR IN 'HAR-
LEQUIN IN APRIL'



Photograph by Baron

HARLEQUIN IN APRIL

THE most exciting aspect of this new ballet by John Cranko, which had its first performance at Sadler's Wells Theatre on May 8th, is that one does not pluck out the heart of its mystery at the first or second visit. A great deal of it is obscure in the same way as the poem whose opening lines provide the idea behind the ballet is obscure, but just as *The Waste Land* sounds superb even when the meaning is veiled, so is *Harlequin in April* enthralling to watch though the thought underlying the action does not always immediately reveal itself.

I am certain that I am not more than half-way to the centre of the labyrinth but the journey is so rewarding that I am content to take my time. Certainly Cranko tends to assume that an audience can follow his thought processes without giving them sufficient visual indication, but he so miraculously avoids pretentiousness that for once this is not irritating.

He links three traditional figures from the Commedia dell'Arte to a more ancient legend and, amazingly, it works. His Harlequin is also Man, his Columbine is Man's Ideal, while Pierrot is another facet of Man, meddling, jealous, most destructive when essaying most to help.

The action is seen as a stage within the actual stage and commences with Pierrot coming out in front of the inset curtain and proscenium. After essaying with great pomposity to sing an aria and discovering that he is without voice, he wanders sadly into the wings, whereupon the inner curtain rises upon two groups of plants, dormant, waiting for the spring. Pierrot sprinkles them with a watering can and gradually their tentative shoots reach upwards to the light and air. Then, from their midst, emerges Harlequin, naked, blind, helpless, but groping out towards life. Pierrot gives him his coat and lath and he springs into full manhood. From amongst the plants he selects his Woman but he cannot hold her for long and he is left grieving and alone.

Then comes the Entracte in which Pierrot again essays to entertain us, this time with his violin, but one by one the strings break and again he is left lamenting. The inner curtain rises and now Harlequin meets his Columbine: but she is protected by Unicorns, guardians of virginity, who magically duplicate themselves to drive away Harlequin. He breaks through their ranks to seize his love only to find that she has no real existence and he is left overwhelmed with grief to return to the earth from

which he came. Pierrot remains in possession of the scene, vaingloriously investing himself in Harlequin's coat as he prances away.

All this may sound a most unpromising basis on which to build a ballet (and I am not sure that I may not have gone somewhat astray in my interpretation), but Cranko's growing mastery of movement and of characterisation is never at a loss. The grouping and choreography devised for the Plants, the dance for Harlequin, his terrible grief and rage at being deprived of his first love, the idyllic *pas de deux* for Harlequin and Columbine and the whole conception of Pierrot grip the imagination.

He is extremely fortunate in his interpreters. As the Plant Woman and Columbine, Patricia Miller shows herself to be an artist of greater range than her previous roles had led one to expect. Hitherto she has seemed exquisite but limited—now she shows passion allied to a finely controlled technique. David Blair, whom we know as an extremely accomplished dancer who has recently revealed a remarkable talent for comedy, again astonishes with an adult characterisation at once sensitive and strong. His Harlequin would be a striking achievement for a dancer ten years his senior. Fortunately, also, the choreographer has not founded this role on personal qualities which will inevitably alter as Blair develops into maturity. This Harlequin will be even better five years from now when the boyish contours of his face will have grown firmer and leaner. Stanley Holden's Pierrot is nothing short of superb. He balances throughout on the knife edge between comedy and pathos and never once is in danger of wavering, nor is he ever tempted to overplay a part which would present endless opportunities to a less unselfish artist.

John Piper's decor is imaginative and sombre, perhaps a little too sombre, though brighter lighting for Harlequin's emergence into manhood would probably help. I did not care for his blue, spotted unicorns (for that matter I do not see eye to eye with Cranko's conception of these gentle beasts) but the other costumes are wonderfully apt. Richard Arnell's music is the best new ballet score for a very long time; he never forgets that it is music for ballet and is not preoccupied in making magnificent effects for his own benefit without regard to what is happening on the stage. Pierrot's song and his 'violin concerto' are felicitous inventions, and his music for the *pas de deux* is finely romantic.

There is one brief passage in *Harlequin in April* which seems to me to break the mood and to be the one moment when the choreographer is in danger of being precious. This occurs at the end of Act 1 when the inner curtain is lowered and we see the dancers



Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

MARGOT FONTEYN AND ALEXANDER GRANT IN
'DAPHNIS AND CHLOE'

for a few seconds talking together, flexing and stretching and then strolling away. The idea presumably, is to point the fact that this is only a performance by dancers, not reality, but when we have sat breathless and moved by Harlequin's struggles, his helplessness, his triumph and despair, we do not wish to be slapped in the face with the reminder that, after all, it is only make-believe.

I hope Cranko will see his way to removing what I feel to be a flaw in an important work of which he, the company and British Ballet may well be proud.

P. W. MANCHESTER.

Ballet Workshop

By FRANK JACKSON

Cul de Sac (choreography, decor and costumes by Leonard Boucher; music by Alan Owen) which opened Ballet Workshop's fifth programme at the Mercury (May 13th), was an embarrassingly noveletish triangle about a poor boy, poor girl and rich man. The thematic parentage of the ballet was all too obvious. Whether the choreographer has, in

addition, any direct knowledge of his own of the lives and emotions of working-class people, I could not tell from his ballet. If he has, he certainly has not discovered a way of expressing his knowledge in terms of dance. Therefore, however sincerely *he* may have felt, his ballet appears to the audience as a string of clichés, both dramatically and balletically speaking.

Jack Carter's 'reconstruction' (as he calls it) of a classical *pas de deux*, which followed, only proved, alas, that choreography which depends entirely for its effect upon technical display must be performed by virtuoso dancers, or at least by dancers who can hide their technical weaknesses under a show of the Grand Manner. Neither was the case here.

Somewhat depressed, therefore, I awaited the appearance of Paul Draper without anticipation. After his first item, a Bach Gigue, he had won me over sufficiently for me to admit that, if he was 'only' a tap dancer, at least he was a virtuoso. I scribbled the phrase 'Third Programme tap' on my programme for use later! By the end of the evening, however, I was applauding without reservation and blessing Ballet Workshop for giving us this opportunity of seeing him.

Draper is clearly one of those people (there have been many in the recent history of dancing) who work best alone. It is easy enough to see, even from a

short recital under the limiting conditions of the Mercury's tiny stage, that his work has influenced other dancers who are familiar to us mainly in films; but I imagine that Draper goes his own way, cultivating his own garden, regardless of what use others make of his discoveries. To crack the wind of the poor phrase, he has certainly cultivated his garden thoroughly; it may not be a large one, but there is no space wasted!

He has two great qualities which are immediately noticeable. The first is his sensitivity to music. His Bach Gigue, and the Gavotte by Thomas which followed, were not, superficially, Gigue-like or Gavotte-ish, yet were in full sympathy with the spirit of the music. Then, in the second part of his programme, his character sketches of a man making a vehement speech and of a dance-hall spiv proved that he has an exact power of observation which he expresses in dance terms which, while owing something to ballet, to American modern dance and, perhaps, to Jooss, are still his own.

I only hope that, by the time this appears, we shall have had the chance to see more of Paul Draper on a larger stage.

The programme was concluded with Paltenghi's *Scherzi della Sorte*, which has been much improved since its first presentation. My original impression was strengthened that this is the most considerable new ballet we have seen here yet.

FESTIVAL BALLET AT THE STOLL

ON May 7th Festival Ballet returned to the Stoll Theatre for a long summer season. The repertoire remains very small, being substantially the same as before, and evidently the policy of guest artists to give the necessary variety is still to be pursued.

However, the first night did see the production of a new ballet—*Impressions* by David Lichine to (for the fourth time) the Bizet Symphony. I am sure that had Monsieur Bizet known what a fascination his solitary essay in the symphonic medium was to exercise on choreographers a century later he would have been only too happy to provide additional examples.

As it turns out, the music is the only pleasing feature of a sorry affair though Lichine seems not to have listened to it with any attention. He simply chops it into four separate sections without regard to the unity inherent in the symphony, and flings the dancers on to the stage to hurl (first movement), wind (second movement), prance (third movement) and jerk (fourth movement) their way through their respective sections. Except in the slow movement no one from first to last has time to finish a step. It was sad to see so vivid an artist as Paula Hinton condemned to

acrobatic throws and lifts though she performed her ungrateful chore with charm and spirit. It was even sadder to see Riabouchinska in the finale apparently engaged in an exhibition of *la savate*, for here the choreography almost ceased to bear any relationship to dancing. Only when Markova and Dolin were on the stage did we have a little respite, for they brought their own distinction to a *pas de deux* not in itself distinguished. I lost count of the *ronds de jambe* performed by Markova but there were quite four times as many as any audience could reasonably be expected to watch with sustained attention, beautifully though she did them.

Hugh Stevenson, the designer, plainly failed to find inspiration in these proceedings, for which one hardly has the heart to blame him.

To turn to happier things, Markova's Prelude and her *pas de deux* with John Gilpin in *Les Sylphides* were worth going miles to see, though the ballet itself was very crudely lit. John Gilpin looks rather more mature this season which will be a great help to him in all his parts, and he is dancing with great skill and *brio*.
P.W.M.

THE BALLETS OF ANDRÉE HOWARD

By JOHN PERCIVAL

NOBODY else in ballet today has quite the same quality of imagination as Andrée Howard. She first tried her hand at choreography while a dancer with the Ballet Club in the early 'thirties, since when she has made about one ballet a year, in addition to producing dances for films, plays and musical shows. Nearly all her works have a distinctly personal flavour which marks them out, whatever their varying qualities, as individual creations and not just copies of someone else's manner or ideas.

Andrée Howard's greatest virtue as a choreographer possibly lies in an ability to conceive a ballet as a whole. She herself has designed the decor and costumes for more than half of her own works, proving more successful with the dresses than the scenery. Herself a dancer, she designs costumes with a line that will neither obscure nor impede movement; her settings, on the other hand, are often little more than unobtrusive backgrounds for the dancing. One of her most successfully decorated ballets, *Mermaid*, has no backcloth, but represents various scenes by the imaginative use of simple properties: the sea by a few strips of muslin, a ship by a single sail, and the land by a balustrade. This gaining of maximum effect from the simplest means is typical of Andrée Howard's best work. The decor for *Mermaid* is, I feel, her only unqualified success as a designer. Her interest in designing, however, reveals an understanding of the composite nature of ballet, although the choreography always assumes the position of first importance, as it should.

Her inspiration is often drawn from literature: from fairy tales, poetry, drama or novels. She is not content, fortunately, merely to reproduce the incidents of her source, nor does she attempt literary criticism in dance form, but sets out to reproduce the mood she discovers in a book, and to reveal its characters in movement. We may consider, for example, the manner in which she adapted *The Sailor's Return*. Everything was compressed and simplified: some half-dozen places in David Garnett's novel were represented by one village, and many complications of the plot, such as Sambo's christening or the birth of a second child, were omitted, so that instead of showing the very gradual effect of village morality on Targett and his negro wife before the final catastrophe, the ballet presented a straightforward series of events. Many characters were omitted, and Targett himself lost some of the subtlety of the extremely complex portrait in the novel, so that interest was concentrated more exclusively on the character of Tulip, whose personal tragedy dominated the ballet much more than her original dominated the novel.

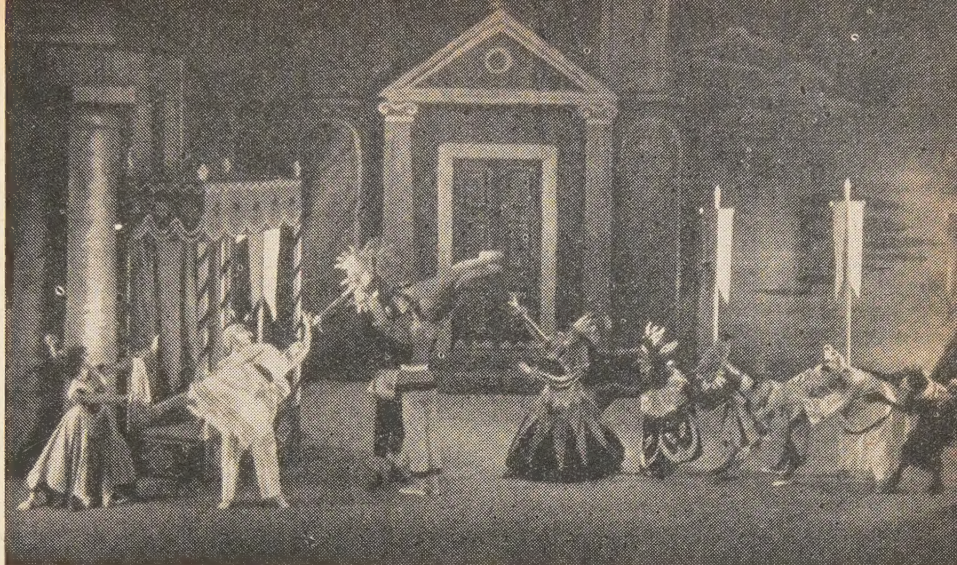
It is, indeed, in the creation of characters who develop during the action that Andrée Howard excels. Ballet is full of stock types—the poet, the hussar, the coquette, the pure young girl—who occur again and again; they are involved in various incidents, and are given an apparent individuality by the different performers, but have no real distinguishing traits, and their characters do not develop in any



'LA FETE ETRANGE' AS
PERFORMED BY SAD-
LER'S WELLS THEATRE
BALLET

Photograph by
Edward Mandiman

Photograph by
Edward Mandintan



way as the result of their adventures. Nobody would suggest that *Le Beau Danube* or *Night Shadow* or *Apparitions* are bad ballets because the characters are types rather than individuals, since Massine, Balanchine and Ashton were aiming at something other than the creation of character. This is, however, a legitimate aim in which Andrée Howard succeeds admirably. The lady who turned into a vixen is but one example, the most striking before our eyes by the end of the ballets. It is no accident that several of the examples quoted are of adolescents: either because adolescence is a time when a deep and significant development of character is likely to occur, or because the wistfulness, the tenderness and the vague romanticism of adolescence are subjects congenial to her, Andrée Howard seems especially well able to treat of young people in her ballets.

Often associated with adolescence in these works is a strange air of mystery. In *La Fête Etrange* this takes the form of a dream like quality. It is evoked partly by the gentle Fauré music, and by the misty formal garden of Fedorovitch's decor; partly, too, by the plot: by the manner in which the country boy is invited to the betrothal party, and the obvious inability of the principal characters to understand properly the emotional complications which are taking place as the boy's infatuation results in the chatelaine's estrangement from her bridegroom, and

brings suffering to all three. The dances themselves, however, play their part in establishing atmosphere and character. They are often fragmentary, but not unfluent, the movement passing easily from one dancer or group of dancers to another. There is one moment when the country boy leaps repeatedly, with almost desperate force, into the air, while four girls are lifted high by their partners, and this moment seems to crystallise all his bewilderment and solitariness. His solos elsewhere, again full of frenzied leaps, contrast with the slow, deliberate quality of his walking movements, and suggest the stress laid on him by the situation. The bridegroom's character is suggested by the fact that he scarcely dances at all: much of the time he stands at the top of the steps, an aloof spectator, passive though not unaffected by what he sees. The bride's suffering is not expressed in a dance of the tormented, agonising quality of that given to Caroline in Tudor's *Jardin aux Lilas*, but becomes clearest through movements of classical adagio (lifts and turns, supported by the two men), used for the emotional effect gained by their resemblance to natural gestures.

Completely different in atmosphere is *Mardi Gras*, where the mystery produces an effect, not of sadness and half-understood longings, but of inexplicable terror. Here, too, although the scenario, Leonard Salzedo's specially composed score and the fine drop-curtain and set by Hugh Stevenson contribute their full share to the creation of atmosphere, the dances also have a considerable effect. The distress of the girl whose future is revealed to her in the course of the *Mardi Gras* revels is heightened by the contrast of the sinister gaiety of the grotesque carnival figures, particularly the reveller in white. The ballet contains

a *pas de trois* for three women: an unusual combination which Howard uses (as Fokine did the similar dance for Chiarina and two other girls in *Carnaval*) to provide a moment of quiet and rest in the middle of the ballet, and thus accentuate the wildness of the revels.

Any air of mystery there may be about *Mermaid*, one of Howard's very first works, derives principally from the fairy-tale plot. The story of the mermaid who rescued a prince from drowning and fell in love with him, following him to dry land only to be turned into foam when he gave his love to a mortal woman, is expressed in dance with the utmost simplicity. The mermaids have quick movements which flow as easily as waves; the courtiers dance with rhythmic precision, with suggestions of Spanish dancing which somehow give them a faintly sinister air (compare the effect of the Bolero in *Soirée Musicale*). The scene of the shipwreck has become a classic example of a clear effect achieved with the strictest economy of means: the sailors' boredom on their calm voyage, the approaching storm and the sinking of the ship are all shown with a single sail, a few brief gestures, and finally one waving hand.

It is difficult to say anything about the style of Howard's choreography that will be true of all her works, because the nature of the dances she composes varies so much from one ballet to another. She has, in fact, no distinctive and personal manner such as most good choreographers possess. All her ballets are based on the standard classical vocabulary of steps, with no striking innovations or adaptations of her own: her best works reveal a similarity of imaginative approach rather than any similarity of the means employed. Her choreographic effects often seem to be of a hit-or-miss nature; therefore, although she not infrequently achieves particularly felicitous passages, there is no air, in her works, of the inevitable and cogent development of a pattern. *Assembly Ball*, for instance, contains some exciting solos and some very striking adagio passages, but the total effect of the ballet is merely the sum of its individual and isolated beauties. It has none of the grandeur of *Symphony in C*, Balanchine's ballet to the same music, nor has it the same unity. In Howard's ballet individual passages merely follow each other in a succession like that of dances at a ball; Balanchine organises the various parts of his work into an intricate and perfectly balanced structure, like that of the individual passages in a piece of music, so that their effectiveness is multiplied over and over again by their relationship one to another.

This is as much as to say that Andrée Howard is not quite a great choreographer. There is always room for a talent less than greatness, however—

the pages of our anthologies are full, after all, of excellent poems by minor poets. None of Andrée Howard's works is altogether devoid of interest, and three at least are excellent. *La Fête Etrange*, *Mermaid* and *Mardi Gras* deserve a lasting place in the English repertories, where the perfection of their original imaginative conception, and the skill with which they have been fittingly realised in dance, music and setting, will enable them to bear comparison with the best works of any of our other choreographers.

Ram Gopal

June 11th, for one week. Theatre Royal, Bath.

June 18th, for one week. Opera House, Cheltenham.

Ram Gopal with his company of Indian musicians and dancers will appear at the opening of the Llan-gollen Eisteddfod on July 3rd.

On July 23rd this company begins a two-week season at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin.

For Festival Year Ram Gopal has arranged many new dances including three short ballets based on traditional Indian ceremonies or fables.

'MERMAID', A VERY EARLY BALLET BY ANDREE HOWARD, WHICH IS STILL IN THE REPERTOIRE OF THE RAMBERT BALLET



JOURNAL OF A JOURNEY (Conclusion)

By FRANKLIN WHITE

BOSTON, MASS: EIGHT PERFORMANCES AT THE
OPERA HOUSE, JANUARY 8TH TO 13TH

TO be faced with difficulties and obstacles is traditionally said to be the finest method of bringing out English stubbornness, and I think this saying held good of the company during the opening performance in Boston—*The Sleeping Beauty*. After the appalling journey from Winnipeg of three nights and two days, with no light and little heat in the bitterest of low temperatures, travelling on the roughest track in, it must be admitted, most dilapidated sleepers, it would have appeared probable that we should be in no fit state to give anything resembling a good performance that evening. Yet according to our own opinion and to the reports of those who saw us, this was one of the best performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* of the tour. I am convinced that it could have been nothing but contrariness on the part of us worn-out dancers, combined with the delight of performing an important première in the almost forgotten atmosphere of an opera house, that gave life to the show that evening: we were not going to be beaten, we refused to show how exhausted we were.

WE LOVED BOSTON

A party followed the performance where we met the British Ambassador and his wife, Sir Oliver and Lady

Franks. Champagne and excellent food in a lovely home revived our weary spirits and by the time we climbed aboard the 'bus once more in the small hours we were in the gayest of moods, and amid riotous laughter were taking lessons from our incomparable ballerina in the art of whistling on our fingers.

I think most of us loved Boston: I know I find it a very beautiful city, and I had a very good time there. For one thing, it was wonderful to set up house for, now my wife was travelling with me, my roommate, Alexander Grant, and I exchanged our allotted hotel room for a three-roomed suite with kitchen. After that we did not bother with restaurants, except when invited out, which happened frequently in this city, or when we made a visit to that famous oyster bar where the continual sliding of dishes over a circular counter has worn deep grooves into the wood. In this bar one pays for twelve oysters and receives a baker's dozen, which to a confirmed oyster addict like myself was a great attraction.

It would have been unusual if nearby Harvard had not, in common with most American universities throughout our tour, risen to the occasion and planned entertaining for us, both private and official. Of the former, space allows no description, but of the official receptions there was, among others, the tea party

JOAN FRANKLIN WHITE
WITH ALEXANDER GRANT
(RAY POWELL LOOKING
ON) IN THE GROUNDS
OF THE CHATEAU FRON-
TENAC, QUEBEC



Photograph by
Franklin White



READY FOR THE FLIGHT HOME

Photograph by
Franklin White

given by the Harvard Dramatic Society in the rooms of the Fog Museum, where at long last I was able to see the set of original water colours generally known as the New Zealand Set of Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job.

OUR LAST TWO DAYS IN AMERICA

I was sorry to leave Boston, and, like the rest of the company, disliked the idea of spending my last free day in America on a train travelling to New York. Sleeping cars were unobtainable for this journey: it was a choice between travelling in day coaches attached to the night train, or sleeping in Boston and travelling all the following day. We chose to miss our sleep and go by night: after all, what did yet another sleepless night matter to us by now? especially when the reward was a whole day to spend as one wished in New York.

We arrived at about six o'clock in the morning, and most of us retired to our rooms at the Wellington Hotel to snatch a few hours' sleep before disappearing into the depths of the city for one final glorious fling. There was so much to do, so many people to see, in that day and a half before we were due over the East River for the last American performance in the Public Auditorium, White Plains, in the county of Westchester, on the following evening. This performance was a Fonteyn-Somes *Le Lac des Cygnes*, for which I think the whole of New York's balletic circles had turned out in force; there must have been very little room left for the locals.

BACK TO CANADA

At one o'clock that same night our train left New

York Central Station for the dash to Toronto, where we had a show on the same evening. This was the most complicated journey of the whole tour; we had to cope with immigration formalities, as well as getting back to New York and picking up the scenery at a junction from Westchester on the Toronto line. Fortunately there were none of the usual delays and mishaps that occurred throughout our travels, and otherwise the evening's performance might have been impossible, and we arrived successfully in the middle of the afternoon.

This year our stay was to be a shorter one than on the previous occasion, so to accommodate at least a proportion of the thousands of people clamouring for tickets we gave eight shows in five days. Once more the audience was warm and appreciative. Such a heavy itinerary left little time for relaxation: we seemed to live in the theatre, with occasional short periods of rest in the hotel. In spite of this, our many kind friends in the city were not baffled by our packed schedule and transferred all their parties to the early hours of the morning. Among those who entertained us lavishly were Mildred Wilkinson, Lady Kemp, The Ladies' Press Club (Lord Wakehurst in attendance) and, as last year, a wonderful party on the last night was given by Mrs. Ransom where we met all our friends and sat round an open log fire, piling our plates high with ham and other delicacies. Previously there had been a repeat of last year's Hay-Ride and Barn Dance: at least such had been the intention until the icy roads put paid to the former part of the entertainment. Instead, many of us turned out in blue jeans and bright shirts and travelled by

'bus to "Fantasy Farm" where we danced square dances until the early hours, when we were sent off loaded with a large food parcel each, presented to us by Colonel Brock, one of the guests.

THE COLDEST WEATHER OF ALL

From Toronto we travelled by day to Ottawa, in the iciest conditions I have ever experienced: more than an inch of ice covered everything, even the twigs on the trees and the telephone wires. This made walking and driving hazardous, although the brilliant sun shining through this shimmering world of ice was one of the most impressive sights of the tour.

The company was invited to a cocktail party given in our honour by Lord and Lady Alexander at Government House, but unfortunately there was little time between our arrival in Ottawa and our appointment at Government House, and none of the luggage containing suitable clothes for the occasion arrived at our hotel in time. When eventually we assembled in the waiting 'bus it could not be persuaded to start; another 'bus had to be sent for and we were nearly an hour late.

The end of the following day saw us in Quebec, where we were to give the last two performances of the tour. Quebec was under deep snow, a general level of three feet where snow ploughs had not been in operation, with drifts of up to twenty feet. In a temperature of more than twenty below, the Lawrence River was frozen over in many places and elsewhere was a swirling mass of rugged broken ice. We had a magnificent view of this from the windows of the Chateau Frontenac, high up on the cliff over-

looking the old part of the city and the river, where we were staying. Beneath these windows there was a long toboggan run on which we spent much of our time, dressed in as many warm clothes as we could pile on, dragging the large six-seater toboggans up the tall ramp before dashing at breath-taking speed down the slippery iced track. It was a wonderful sensation which Margot Fonteyn, dressed in a blue ski suit and a fur cap, shared with us on the second afternoon. There were three parallel tracks, and we ran races, including one in which Margot, Leslie Edwards, Robert Irving and myself beat Peter Clegg. Harijs Plucis, Michael Somes and Jean Gilbert. On this occasion Margot took the most frightening position of all on the toboggan, perched right in the front with her legs over the edge, watching the steep run falling away below her.

THE LAST PERFORMANCE AND RETURN HOME

To celebrate the final performance, our impresario, Mr. Sol. Hurok, said good-bye to us with a sumptuous steak and champagne dinner party after the show in the big dining-room of the Chateau Frontenac. This was a magnificent finish to the tour, with cocktails before the meal and many other drinks served before lights were lowered for the procession of waiters to enter carrying *Omelette Norvégienne Flambée* covered with lighted brandy. Later Mr. Hurok made a speech of farewell, which was answered by our General Manager, Herbert Hughes, at the end of which Ray Powell proposed a toast to our beloved ballerina, Margot Fonteyn. The room rang with our applause and cheers for several minutes



ALEXANDER GRANT, HARIJS
PLUCIS, BERYL GREY, ALEXIS
RASSINE AND PETER CLEGG

Photograph by
Franklin White



MARGOT FONTEYN AND
MICHAEL SOMES IN
THE BEAUTIFUL PAS
DE DEUX IN 'DAPHNIS
AND CHLOE'

*Photograph by
Bryan Ashbridge*

before Margot could make herself heard, thanking us and sweetly adding that her success could not have been achieved without us all.

At four o'clock we bordered the "ballet special" for the last time and retired for final drinks with the American orchestra. I shall never know whether it was the effect of so much good food and drink, or just that we were so used to violent shunting, that later enabled most people to sleep right through the derailling of two of the scenery coaches near the front of the train which happened not long after we left Quebec. This could have been quite a serious accident, but luckily it was nothing more than a good joke to those of us who only heard about it on the following day.

We had already experienced one coincidence when our luggage had been left behind on leaving New York, as happened last year: now at the end of the tour we were to experience another, when we were delayed a day in Montreal before flying the Atlantic. When we at last left, we only by a quarter of an hour missed breaking the record flight for Stratocruisers on that route. So fast did we travel that although we were served lunch just after the take-off at 1.30, it was night long before we finished eating.

To close this journal I should like to pay tribute to H.M. Customs who treated us all in the gentle manner appropriate to arriving home at three minutes past three in the morning after such an exhausting tour.

Rambert Ballet

Here are the promised details of the special Scottish Tour sponsored by the Arts Council for the Festival of Britain:—

June 4th, for one week. Repertory Theatre, Dundee.
June 11th, for one week. Repertory Theatre, Perth.
June 18th, for one day. Town Hall, Grangemouth.
June 20th, for two days. Empire Theatre, Inverness.
June 22nd, for two days. Town Hall, Forres.
June 25th, for two days. Academy Hall, Dumfries.
June 28th, for three days. Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh.

July 2nd, for three days. Town Hall, Bridge of Allan.
July 5th, for three days. Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline.

The Company will be at the Pavilion, Harrogate, for the week commencing July 16th, after which they go to Canterbury for the week of July 30th as part of the Canterbury Festival.

Jose Greco

Jose Greco with his company of Spanish musicians and dancers will be appearing at Sadler's Wells Theatre for a short season commencing June 18th. Jose Greco made a great impression when he made a special appearance before an invited audience last winter at the Royal Opera House under the auspices of the Royal Academy of Dancing. La Quica, the greatest dancer and teacher of the Flamenco style today, will be appearing with the company.

TELEVISION SURVEY

By LISA GORDON SMITH

WHEN I hear, in the course of ordinary conversation, that "Schubert wrote *Lilac Time*", I am prepared to attribute the words to the common carelessness of daily speech or to the possibly justifiable ignorance of those whose business it is not to be in possession of the facts. When, in the same context, I hear that *Les Sylphides* is "by" Chopin, my distress is the greater by my love for both—although in fairness I have to confess that the same excuse may prevail. But, when a radio announcer perpetrates the same error, as has sometimes been the case, my irritation leaves me with little that is printable to say.

How much more, then, was I made indignant by the introduction to the television programme of *Les Sylphides* produced by Christian Simpson on March 23rd!

The actual performance of the ballet, by Marjorie Tallchief, George Skibine, Gerd Larsen and Svetlana Beriosova, was very pleasing and, if not especially distinguishable from any other good performance, held nothing, in execution or production, which could give anything but pleasure to admirers of the ballet.

The introduction, or prologue, was a different matter. We were treated to the unedifying sight of Chopin at his piano, "stuck" for an idea for a composition and being exhorted by his Muse to the extent (we were to assume) of giving the music for *Les Sylphides* to a palpitating world.

Had Chopin been living at the time, there is no reason to suppose that he would not have been delighted to compose a ballet for Fokine; their ideas on the ethical and ethnological origins of their arts were similar and one feels that they would have worked happily together. Had it been possible for Fokine to have consulted the spirit of Chopin on the subject (and, for all I know to the contrary, he may have done so) there is no reason to suppose that the latter would have had any objection to the use to which the former put a number of items from his collected works.

None the less, the fact remains that Chopin did not compose *Les Sylphides*, but that the music for that ballet was itself "composed" from various of Chopin's concert pieces, many of them based on the folk-music of his adopted country.

The treatment meted out in that particular television programme may have been a matter of taste, but it certainly was not a matter of fact.

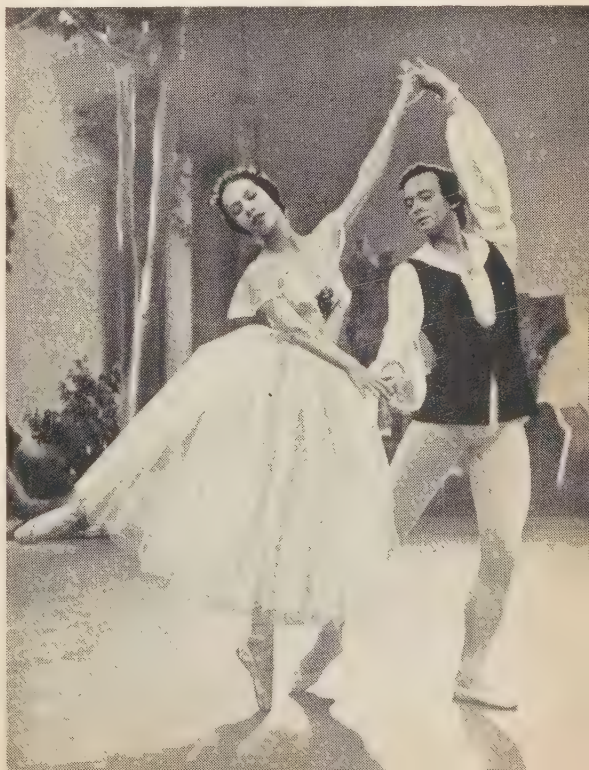
Teleballet's star is not in the ascendant just at present (although Domini Callaghan, Michel de Lutry and others have been showing us some lovely dancing in the Vic Oliver Shows which would well repay the

attention of balletomanes) and this may, to many, be a matter for some regret. Ballet is, to the average viewer, not entirely acceptable, and to the avowed devotee of ballet the medium of television has a number of disadvantages; these facts notwithstanding, there is a place and a following for this new form of balletic entertainment, albeit at present a minority following. Why, then, do the television planners tend to saturate the programmes with ballet until the average viewers are moved to assert their rights with massed protests, and then to cut down ballet's time allocation to so little that even the minority do not get their due share? Surely it would be fairer to all to decide upon the amount of viewing time per annum which is to be devoted to ballet and to space it out more evenly?

For London viewers, at least, the best time for loading up the television programmes with ballet is at the time when there are fewer theatrical seasons being given by the various companies, and not the reverse, as has been the apparent policy up to now.

MARJORIE TALLCHIEF AND GEORGE SKIBINE IN 'LES SYLPHIDES'
TELEVISED ON MARCH 23RD

Photograph by Paul Wilson



FRENCH ACCENT

JEAN BABILÉE HAS BEEN THE SENSATION OF THE OPENING WEEK OF
BALLET THEATRE'S SPRING SEASON IN NEW YORK

By ARTHUR TODD

PARISIAN dancers and ballets were highlights of the mid-April opening week of Ballet Theatre's spring season at the Metropolitan Opera House. In addition to Jean Babilée, Nathalie Philippart, Colette Marchand, *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* and *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* have been responsible for a major portion of excitement. Not to be overlooked in the first week's triumphs have been Alicia Alonso's *Giselle*, Mary Ellen Moylan's *Swan Lake* and Youskevitch in every work that he appeared in, as usual. And the major fiasco of the week was Herbert Ross' new work, *The Thief Who Loved a Ghost*.

Jean Babilée, who made his American debut in *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* with Nathalie Philippart on the gala opening programme more than justified all that we had heard about him. From the rise of the curtain, when he was discovered on the scarlet covered couch awaiting his nemesis, to the conclusion, when he was led away over the roof-tops, the audience was galvanised. Then there was an ovation for both the Babilées such as has not been heard in New York since Sadler's Wells departed. Certainly this was a tribute to two great artists (second and third viewings of this work only confirm the splendid support provided by Nathalie Philippart) for the piece, as such, leaves much to be desired. Actually, it is not a ballet at all because it does not have a true flow or continuity. Rather, it is a technically demanding and highly dramatic theatre dance work. Though one can see the ironic counterpoint provided by Bach's *Passacaglia* in C Minor, one wonders if cheap jazz music played on a gramophone would not have been an equally startling accompaniment. Also missing was the original set, and Oliver Smith's last-minute replica of the original designs lacked the added drama of Wakhevitch's sets which we have only seen in pictures. All of this is petty, however, in view of Babilée's magnificence.

Oddly enough, Babilée's much-heralded *Blue Bird*, where he was charmingly if not brilliantly supported by Ruth Ann Koesun, was a disappointment. To be sure, virtuosity was here in a great degree but missing were the traditional classic style and bearing that are associated with this role. Perhaps this may be because Babilée's gifts seem to lie in the dramatic rather than the classical realm. In the former, surely, he is unrivalled, at least in the world of ballet, for his use of dynamics, varieties of tempi and bodily control are

truly fantastic. Though his technique is obviously based on academic ballet, the results, oftentimes, are more comparable to modern dance. This is especially evident in the way Babilée externalises the innermost emotion into movement. Ranging from frenetic frenzy to restrained force, his technique is incredible to behold and we now await his own ballet, *L'Amour et son Amour*.

Roland Petit's *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit*, featuring Colette Marchand, who is on leave from the Ballets de Paris, proved an interesting if not sensational addition to Ballet Theatre's already broad repertoire. What this work lacks in its broader aspects is amply recompensed by a somewhat firmer choreographic base than we have come to expect of Petit and he has produced some beautiful movement, especially in the duets devised for Agatha and the Young Musician. The first scene seems unnecessarily long and repetitious but the second and third scenes seem stronger and more varied in movement. Joan Sheldon staged this ballet in the absence of Mr. Petit, who is currently in Hollywood. As might be expected, Miss Marchand's familiarity with the role gave her a decided edge over the rest of the company, though one can presume that the other members will quickly grow in their roles. John Kriza, as the Young Musician, was dramatically though not technically strong and Eric Braun made a splendid Cat Baron.

Interestingly enough, the classics in the permanent repertoire fared best during the first week of performances. On opening night Mary Ellen Moylan offered an elegant *Swan Lake* with the prodigious Mr. Youskevitch as her partner. Though still lacking in warmth, Miss Moylan continues to grow in her role and her brilliance and clean line are added attributes. The really great evening came later in the week when Alicia Alonso danced her first *Giselle* in New York in three years and what a beautifully balanced performance it was with dance technique and emotional qualities at a uniformly high level. Youskevitch's Albrecht was strong in characterisation as well as technique and once more he displayed his extraordinary virtues in partnering. Mary Ellen Moylan's Queen of the Willis could have been even more dominant had she not had to rush through many sections to keep up with the racing tempo as conducted by Alexander Smallens. *Les Sylphides*, too, appears to be in good form this season, especially as it is being danced by Lillian



ILONA MURAI IN 'THE THIEF WHO LOVED A GHOST'

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

ALICIA ALONSO IN 'FALL RIVER LEGEND'

Photograph by Hugelmeyer

Lanese, Norma Vance and Mary Ellen Moylan. Though technically wanting in the male role (at least in the first performance), John Kriza otherwise danced with simplicity and directness. Also added to the repertoire during the first week was William Dollar's *Concerto*, a new version of his earlier *Constantia* set to Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 with new scenery and costumes designed by Robert Davison. Mr. Davison's colourings were gently pastel in tone but the tunic-like skirts designed for the women in the ensemble seemed out of keeping with a purely classical work and his decorative decor of a landscape sometimes detracted from the movement on stage. Though a lyrically pleasant work with such stalwarts as Alonso and Youskevitch to lead its paces, it seems like gently distilled Balanchine when compared to works such as *Theme and Variations* in the repertoire.

The heretofore widely respected Herbert Ross, in conjunction with John Ward, came up with a major faux pas in *The Thief Who Loved a Ghost*. Labelled, perhaps wisely, as "An Entertainment", this work cannot seriously be regarded as a ballet since props are its main premise and consecutive movement is almost nil. Props, sets, costumes and novelty can never fully replace dance but Mr. Ross, who said so much with movement in *Caprichos*, seems unaware of this. Combining elements remindful of *Ladies in Retirement*, *The Mad Woman of Chaillot* and *La Croqueuse des*

Diamants, Ross weaves a tale of two mad ex-ballerinas, their niece and a thief, bringing the latter together in a vaudevillian conclusion. Ilona Murai and Lucia Chase are the mad ladies, Ruth Ann Koesun is their lovely niece and John Kriza is the thief. Mr. Ward's sets are not unlike the Addams' cartoons in "The New Yorker" and his living room set bore more than a faint resemblance to the set in *The Medium*. There was even a slide which Miss Koesun descended—or maybe it was a coal shoot—we really never knew which. And one can be certain that Mr. Petit would be amused to see how Mr. Ross employs bicycles for the policemen, detectives and, finally, even the thief and the young niece use one to make their merciful escape from this conglomeration. The one bright spot in the entire proceedings was Lucia Chase's recreation of a Loie Fuller-like dance, whirling and spinning around in a voluminous costume under constantly changing spotlights. All this may be "an entertainment" but it is in no sense ballet and, as such, it would not even be in keeping in a Broadway musical.

The American genre works have not been faring as well as the classics this season and *Billy the Kid* was a special case in point. In this work the ensemble plays almost as vital a role as the principals yet the corps was generally listless, dispirited and not always exact. *Rodeo*, at least as far as the ensemble is concerned, could stand further rehearsal and in *Fall River*

Legend the corps behave as though they were in a musical comedy and not in a dramatic theatre work. Missing, too, is some of the individual characterisation that is generally a hall mark of de Mille's ballets. On the credit side of *Fall River Legend* is Alicia Alonso's uniformly fine performance as the Accused. Conceived along balletic rather than dramatic lines, it is nonetheless a rich performance and it is wonderfully complemented by Lucia Chase's superb portrayal as the Stepmother.

Looking ahead to the balance of Ballet Theatre's season, there will be Jean Babilée's *L'Amour en son Amour*, Carmelita Maracci's *Circo de Espana*, and Alicia Alonso's choreographic debut with *Ensayo Sinfonico*, set to Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*, all of which sound promising. Enthusiastic audiences have already given Ballet Theatre a resounding welcome on their return to New York and, though Nora Kaye, Hugh Laing and Diana Adams are still very much missed, this versatile organisation continues moving forward.

International Ballet

As already announced, International Ballet will present a season of ballet at the Royal Festival Hall from Thursday, July 26th to Saturday, September 1st. A special flat stage has been designed to fit over the orchestra area which will be seventy feet wide and thirty-two feet deep. Mr. Denys Wreford is designing a series of out-door period settings and changes of scene will be effected almost entirely by light for which an elaborate automatic colour change lighting installation will be operated under the direction of Mr. William Lorraine.

The repertoire will include *The Sleeping Princess*, *Le Lac des Cygnes*, *Giselle*, *Coppélia*, *Gaieté Parisienne*, *Carnaval*, *Les Sylphides*, *Visions*, and the recent revival of Massine's *Capriccio Espagnol*. During this season Algranoff's first full-length ballet *For Love or Money* with a score by Gilbert Vinter, conductor of the B.B.C. Midland Orchestra and costumes by John Bainbridge will have its première.

Mona Inglesby will be appearing as prima ballerina, the other ballerinas being Claudia Algranova and Hélène Armfelt. Other principal dancers include Algranoff, Ernest Hewitt, Errol Addison, Yat Malmgreen, Denys Palmer and Sophie Trant. Guest artists and guest conductors will be announced later.

In spite of the size of the auditorium, the Royal Festival Hall is so constructed that every member of the audience obtains a perfect view of the stage without any feeling of being too far away.

Seats are priced from 15/- to 3/6 and are now on sale at the box office.

Meanwhile, prior to this important engagement, the company is appearing on June 18th for one week at the Royal Opera House, Belfast, and for two weeks from June 25th at the Grand Theatre, Leeds.

News from Paris

ON April 25th the Paris Opera presented a new ballet and a revival. The new ballet is *The Astrologer* based on a fable by La Fontaine with choreography by Serge Lifar and a score by Henri Barraud.

A village astrologer believes he has discovered truth at the bottom of a well. Having made the descent and by a miracle arrived safe and sound, he realises that truth lies not in astrology but in the love of a charming peasant girl. This ballet was danced by Micheline Bardin, one of the stars of the Opera, and by Roger Ritz. One can hardly speak of 'choreography'. One *pas de deux*, a few peasant dances and a solo do not constitute a ballet. Henri Barraud, who has already composed several scores of considerable lyrical breadth is less at ease faced with an idea which is not particularly choreographic and his music is not suitable for dancing. The decor was by Madame Roland Manuel.

IGOR YOUSKEVITCH

Photograph by Alfredo Valente



The revival of *Scheherazade* is a faithful copy of Fokine's work, reproduced by Lifar and Nicolas Zvereff, with the same sumptuous and decorative decor and costumes by Bakst. Alexandre Kalioujny was magnificent in the role made famous by Nijinsky, Micheline Bardin was Zobeide, and Mlles. Lafon, Bourgeois, Dynalix and Messieurs Efimoff, Jamet and Legrand were among the other dancers. The whole *corps de ballet* responded to the barbaric frenzies of the ballet. The Paris Opera, whose task it is to keep alive the works of the past, must be congratulated on this revival.

* * *

The Empire, in the Avenue Wagram close to the Etoile, has recently been completely renovated and has become overnight the ideal theatre for ballet. The slope of the stalls allows everyone a perfect view of the dancers, the stage is neither too large nor too small and the auditorium is pleasing and well ventilated. Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas is there for a season of over a month and its success is undeniable. After Ethery Pagava and André Eglevsky left the company those excellent dancers, George Zoritch and Serge Golovine were elevated to top rank. Amongst the *danseuses* the youthful Harriet Toby has been promoted to stardom. Rosella Hightower, Marjorie Tallchief and George Skibine remain of the original stars. John Taras, the *maître de ballet*, has worked extremely hard on the ensemble which is now excellent.

For this season in Paris there have been no new ballets: however, *The Mute Wife* by Antonia Cobos, a short ballet based on a story by Anatole France and created in 1944, has been well received. At the Bordeaux Festival at the end of May, this company will present a big new work in three acts—*The Four Seasons* by Leonide Massine with music by Henri Sauguet.

* * *

Four special evenings of ballet, with Chauviré, Philippart, Babilée, Skouratoff and a group of other young dancers including Violette Verdy, Jacqueline Moreau from the Opera, Xenia Palley, Deryck Mendel, etc., were given at the Palais de Chaillot at the beginning of April.

We again saw Babilée's *L'Amour et son Amour* which remains an exquisite thing. *Les Mystères* by the Hungarian choreographer Aurel Milloss, is very nebulous with a Germanic aesthetic which is already outmoded. The four great stars already mentioned appeared in this ballet. *Delice Populi* or *Scarlattiana* presents the characters of the Commedia dell'Arte in a series of imbroglios and amorous entanglements which have been seen time and time again. Jacqueline Moreau is the ravishing star of this ballet. Yvette Chauviré danced beautifully in a classical *pas de deux* with Skouratoff. Taken all in all, these performances



A NEW PORTRAIT OF ROSELLA HIGHTOWER

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

showed nothing new but were a *succès d'estime* for the dancers who appeared. The ballets mentioned, together with a choreographic interpretation by Chauviré of the first movement of Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata, will be seen in June at the Florence Festival, together with other ballets now in preparation.

FERDINAND REYNA.

The London Ballet Circle

Since it was formed over four years ago, the Circle has always tried to present talks each month by well-qualified speakers but seldom has the attendance been sufficient to cover the cost of hiring the hall and the lecturer's fee. We are most anxious to increase our membership, which costs only 10/- a year, so that we may put the Circle on a sound financial basis and expand our activities in other directions. We would welcome new members from all over the London area.

Our June lecture will be given by Franklin White on "The Modern American Dance" and in July, Beth Dean will give a recital of Australian Aboriginal Dances. *Dates.* June 17th and July 15th, at 3 p.m. at the Salle Erard, Great Marlborough Street.

Full particulars from Stanley Hawkins, 132 Kensington Park Road, W.11.

Balletomane's Bookshelf

INDIAN DANCING. By Ram Gopal and Serozh Dadachanji. (Phoenix House, 1951. 16s.).

CLASSICAL DANCES AND COSTUMES OF INDIA. By Kay Ambrose. With an Introduction by Ram Gopal. (A. & C. Black, 1950. 25s.).

These two books, published within a few months of each other, are the first books on Indian dancing to be published in England. Both are closely associated with Ram Gopal: he is part-author of one of them, while the other was produced by an English artist after touring with Ram Gopal for several years; and both are illustrated mainly with photographs and drawings of Ram Gopal.

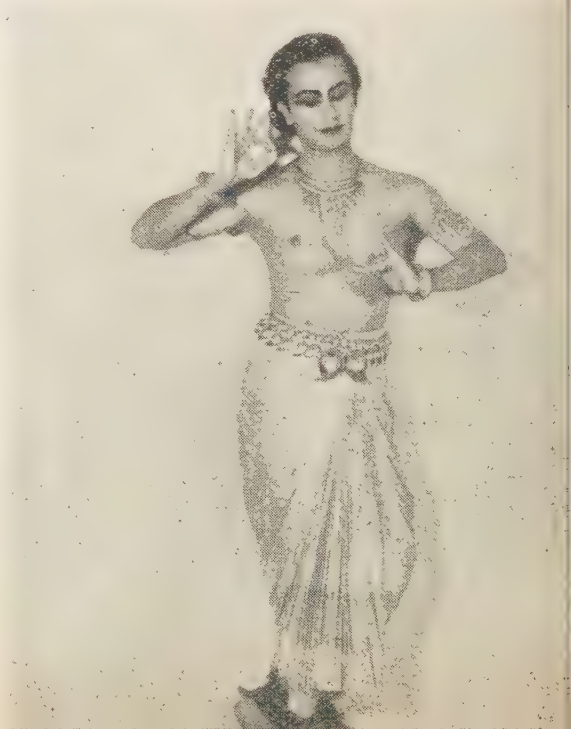
Indian Dancing is a short but well-balanced introduction to classical Indian dancing, following closely the treatment of this subject in various standard books (to which due acknowledgment is given). As in all Indian books on dancing the reader is first told the legends surrounding the birth of Indian dancing, and the essential religious background is carefully explained. Then comes a description of the gesture language common to all the classical styles, followed by short accounts of each style. The book ends with a comparison of Indian dancing and ballet, and a summary of the various efforts made to revive Indian dancing in recent years.

In outline Miss Ambrose's book is similar to *Indian Dancing*, but her treatment of the various subjects is far more individual. Her book stands out from all other books on Indian dancing because of the skilful way in which text and drawings come together to give the reader a clear idea of each style of dancing. The long chapter on Bharata Natyam (twenty-eight pages out of a total of ninety-five) represents an important contribution to Indian dance literature: it covers nearly all the important aspects of this style, and includes a remarkable series of seventy drawings showing Ram Gopal in all the movements of one of his versions of the *Alarippu*. The other chapters in this book are less satisfactory. The treatment of religion is particularly inadequate: to characterise Siva by saying that he "loves smashing things" is rather like saying that Jehovah is fond of setting bushes on fire. The short Kathakali chapter is thrown out of balance by the inclusion of two dances which are not Kathakali.

In both books the chapters on Kathak are misleading. Kathak (the classical dance of North India) is described as a light, decorative style, charming and elegant but lacking in the depth, spirituality and elaborate technique of the classical styles of South India; and both books speak only of the Kathak school of



TWO ILLUSTRATIONS FROM 'INDIAN DANCING' IN WHICH RAM GOPAL IS SHOWING (ABOVE) THE KATHAKALI AND (BELOW) THE BHARATA NATYAM HAND GESTURES REPRESENTING THE WORD 'WIFE'



ndadin. In fact there are a number of schools of
 that the most important being the Lucknow school
 taught by Brindadin, and corresponding to the
 French school of ballet) and the Jaipur school (as
 taught by Jailal, and corresponding to the Italian
 school of ballet). The descriptions of Kathak in the
 books under review do apply to the degenerate Luck-
 now school of today, but they have no relevance to
 the magnificent Jaipur school. It is hard to under-
 stand why the Jaipur school is ignored, for two of the
 greatest living exponents of this school (the guru Rad-
 lal Misra and his pupil Kumudini) have been with
 Ram Gopal for three years, and when Ram Gopal
 dealt with Kathak in his admirable lecture-demonstra-
 tions at the Watergate Theatre a few months ago he
 spoke only of the Jaipur school.

European readers are liable to be irritated by the
 comparisons between Indian dancing and Western
 ballet in the Phoenix House book, for the authors
 weight the scales heavily against the West by com-
 paring Indian dancing at its best with ballet at its
 worst. One may hope that the publication of fur-
 ther editions will provide the opportunity for amend-
 ing this chapter and the chapter on Kathak.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of these books
 is the way in which they complement each other: to-
 gether they provide a fascinating introduction to In-
 dian dancing, and readers would be well advised to
 buy both.

FERNAU HALL.

BALLET AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS—1951

AMONG some twelve and a half hundred exhibits
 at our chief display of paintings and sculptures,
 one expects to find some devoted to Theatre. Yet
 portraits—official and studio jobs—and landscapes of
 every European kind, overwhelm all other works.

The R.A. President, Sir Gerald Kelly, continues his
 attention to Burmese dancers—rather than dance. His
 'Ma Seyn Me, pose XIV' is, like his other dancers,
 low in tone, and not in any dancing movement. How
 we miss the vigour of Lavery and Philpot who sought
 and painted dancers of the ballet! At the other ex-
 treme of scale, Ethel M. Cook follows her 1950 minia-
 ture of Galina Ulanova with one of Margot Fonteyn
 —in her costume in Act III of *Coppélia*—an attractive
 piece of stylish painting.

Dame Laura Knight, faithful to her Circus, gives
 us horses and acrobats, in 'Olympian Act' or 'Finish-
 ing Horse' but no circus dancers, not even a Colum-
 bine. A. K. Lawrence, who clearly likes modern sub-
 jects more than he likes 'modern art' has painted



VIOLETTA ELVIN AS LYKANION WITH MICHAEL SOMES IN
 'DAPHNIS AND CHLOE', SKETCHED BY JEAN TARGET

'Vivian Leigh as Blanche du Bois'—and William
 Dring shows 'The Rehearsal' a small girl pointing her
 toe alongside the domestic piano. There are large
 oil paintings of 'Seville Chorus Girl' and 'Bullfighter'
 by Sir Gerald Kelly—they are sitters. Russell Flint
 shows a trio from the play 'Dear Miss Phoebe' and
 Stephen Spurrer has a not-identifiable 'The Foyer'.

Sculpture from the dance proves even more diffi-
 cult; and reveals the hollowness of choreographic at-
 tempts to discover dance inspiration in sculpture,
 instead of in life. There is a terra-cotta bust named
 "Ballet Dancer" by Yvonne Hudson; and a statuette
 in stone called 'Dancer' by G. H. J. Day. Allan
 Howes—successful in many charming dance figures,
 shows in his 'Initiation' a group of two; and Richard
 Garbe has 'Masqueraders'. The dance group with
 most movement is called 'The Three Graces' a 10-inch
 statuette group of three in terra-cotta, with a sugges-
 tion of Minoan influence in its simple colour. Audrey
 Blackman should make some more, she evidently has
 the right touch.

Among other pictures that suggest dance and music
 or theatre we find 'Moroccan Musicians' by Erich
 Wolfsefeld; 'Nancy Price, C.B.E.' by A. G. Finney; and
 'The Dressing Room' by David Cox. Possibly the
 vaguely-named 'Fairy Golz' may belong to Theatre.

Not every teacher or dancer can invest in half a
 dozen original paintings or sculptures at fifty guineas
 each; but excellent prints in other media can be ob-
 tained at very modest prices, wherewith to adorn the

classroom walls or to give as especially welcome school prizes. A school desirous of making a notable splash could commission an artist to provide a private edition of colour prints; they are technically possible at economical rates in lithography, etchings or woodcuts, all in full colour.

The New York Metropolitan Museum has some wonderful prints from the Degas pictures in its own collections; so precise that under glass they cannot be distinguished from originals. Fabers have published a slim book with similar Degas prints.

In London stores, there are available larger prints of ballet scenes, including Laura Knight's 'Ballet' and one by Doris Zinkeisen, 'The Fairy Queen' while Urquhart Murray offers 'Ballet Russe—Sylphides'. The prices range from one to three guineas or so, unframed.

W.G.R.

Ballet Vocabulary (4)

Compiled by LEO KERSLEY and JANET SINCLAIR

BOURREE, PAS DE

There are two kinds of *pas de bourrée*, the more striking being the *pas de bourrée couru* (or more correctly *courant*, which means running), in which the dancer appears to glide along on her toes, either turned out or natural, picking them up minutely in sharp succession, either travelling, or (illogically) on the spot.

Generally the feet are together in a *pas de bourrée couru*, but in "Checkmate" the Black Queen and the Red Pawns do many *pas de bourrée couru* with the legs apart. Often a girl will prepare for a supported *pirouette* by doing one with the legs opening to the front and back.

This step is used in a variety of ways to create different effects: for instance, both in Myrtha's first entrance in *Giselle*, in which she glides diagonally across the stage, and in the entrance of the Betrayed Girl in the third scene of *The Rake's Progress*.

Although a *pas de bourrée couru* is easily recognizable, it is no more common than a plain *pas de bourrée*, which consists of three movements. The dancer's feet are together; then, in one movement, (1) she bends one knee, then straightens the leg and rises on the toe, while the other leg is taken out just clear of the floor and moves back to join the supporting leg; immediately (2) the leg that was extended takes the weight, and the other steps out onto the toe in the opposite direction: (3) as the latter leg bends, the other closes into it. Alternatively the leg which last closed can take the weight, while the other touches it just clear of the floor.

Of course, if the dancer already has one leg extended and the other knee bent, she can begin the *bourrée* from that point.

This step can be made more staccato by picking the disengaged foot up to the ankle or knee as it moves and can be done turning.

The ballerina in the Black Swan *pas de deux* precedes the thirty-two *fouettés* with a *pas de bourrée* turning, and the steps that Monsieur Noverre's *coryphées* find too fast for them in the first scene of *The Prospect Before Us* are a series of *pas de bourrée* to the front and back.

The *corps de ballet* in *La Boutique Fantasque* enter doing a *pas de bourrée couru* and then do a series of ordinary *pas de bourrée* on the toes, picking their feet up and ending each one on one foot.

BRISÉ

A *brisé* is a neat beating step in which the dancer uses her spring to skim across the floor.

In a simple *brisé* the dancer stands with her feet together, then swings her foot to the side and springs in that direction, quickly bringing the supporting leg to beat beneath it just off the floor. Both feet return to their original position on landing.

In Act I of *Coppélia*, Swanilda traverses the stage diagonally towards the audience doing eight *brisés*, returns performing three *temps levé* in attitude on alternate feet takes a pose and then repeats the *brisés*.

MARGOT FONTEYN AS CHLOE, SKETCHED BY JEAN TARGET



to the Editor, **BALLET TODAY**.

Dear Madam,

On behalf of the uniformed door-keepers at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, we of the Corps of Commissionaires wish it to be published that the paragraph in the May issue of **BALLET TODAY** headed 'Party Manners' did not in any way refer to us. There are members of the staff at this theatre who are not members of the Corps of Commissionaires.

Yours truly,

S. A. ROBINS, C.S.M.,

Corps of Commissionaires.

BRISÉS VOLES may begin with both feet together: it is usually seen in a series, begun with one foot extended behind. The back leg is thrown in front, very high: immediately the dancer springs and swings the supporting leg up to beat beneath the front leg, which then descends to the ground leaving the other extended in front. The dancer has now changed his feet and is ready to reverse the step by swinging the front leg back to beat and then change with the supporting leg.

The male dancer travels diagonally forwards to begin the coda of the Blue Bird *pas de deux* in a series of 24 *brisés volés* alternating to front and back. Babilée's performance is unusual in that he performs these *brisés volés* on a diagonal from left to right with a double beat.

CABRIOLE

The dancer throws one leg up, then springs from the supporting leg, which comes up to beat the raised leg. The dancer then lands on the supporting leg. A *cabriole* may also be performed when one leg is already raised in the air, and in both cases the *cabriole* may be performed *ouverte*, with the raised leg retaining its position in the air, or *fermé*, in which case the dancer begins to close the raised leg immediately on landing. *Cabrioles* are always performed with the legs straight while in the air.

In any case the raised leg maintains the pose for as long as possible, to give the impression of a pose being held throughout the jump, and of the dancer thrown higher in this position by the beat of the supporting leg. In fact the impact of the supporting leg throws the raised leg a little higher, but once this movement becomes at all exaggerated the whole quality of a pose in the air is destroyed for the sake of an acrobatic trick. This, of course, is useful in eccentric dancing.

The *cabriole* is said to be double or triple when the legs beat twice or three times.

Immediately before the entry of the Prince in Ashton's *Cinderella*, the four cavaliers in attendance,

who are standing on the rostrum at the back of the stage, perform four *cabrioles* (front, back, front, back).

(To be continued)

Bouquet of the Month



The revival of *Mam'zelle Angot* showed a sad falling off after the brilliant, taut performances we used to enjoy. But Franklin White's clever 'double' as the ridiculous chief of police with a roving and lecherous eye for the young ladies, and his landlord whose delight at the sudden influx of visitors is turned to despair when they dance away without paying his bill, remains unaffected by the general disintegration so he is herewith presented with this month's bouquet.

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